

## **Chesapeake Bay Exception CBE-11-100: 25 Whittaker's Mill-Suttle**

Staff report for the May 11, 2011 Chesapeake Bay Board Public Hearing

This staff report is prepared by James City County Engineering and Resource Protection to provide information to the Chesapeake Bay Board to assist them in making a recommendation on this assessment. It may be useful to members of the general public interested in this assessment.

### **Existing Site Data & Information**

Applicant: Michael Suttle

Land Owner: Michael Suttle

Location: 25 Whittaker's Mill

Parcel: Lot 25, Whittaker's Mill, Kingsmill Subdivision

Parcel Identification: 5040300025

Lot Size: 1.21 acres

RPA Area on Lot: 0.59 acres or 48.7% of the lot

Watershed: College Creek (HUC Code JL35)

Proposed Activity: Installation of a new stone retaining wall

### **Proposed Impacts**

Impervious Area: Approximately 200 square feet

RPA Encroachment: Seaward 50 foot RPA Buffer

### **Brief Summary and Description of Activities**

Mr. Michael Suttle of 25 Whittaker's Mill of the Kingsmill Subdivision has applied for an exception to the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance) for an encroachment into the RPA buffer for the construction of a new stone retaining wall, approximately 200 square feet of disturbance. The proposed retaining wall is approximately forty and one half feet long and four and one half feet in height to be located on the western end of the property directly adjacent to the back of the existing residence. The entire proposed stone retaining wall is situated within the seaward 50 ft. RPA buffer.

A detailed RPA Mitigation Planting Plan (Plan) has been provided along with the exception request for your review. The plan proposes to mitigate for the RPA impacts by planting one (1) native tree, fifteen (15) native shrubs, and a rain garden to be installed at the midpoint of the proposed retaining wall. The amount of plantings along with the proposed rain garden exceeds the standard mitigation planting requirements of the County for impervious cover impacts.

The application provided includes a detailed drawing of the cross-section of the proposed retaining wall. Staff considers the entire retaining wall to be impervious cover (approximately 50 sf). Access to the site will be provided from the left corner of the driveway and along the left side of the residence to the work area.

### **Staff Recommendations**

The issue before the Board is the addition of approximately 50 square feet of impervious area within the seaward RPA buffer for construction of a new stone retaining wall. The Board is to determine whether or not this is consistent with the spirit and intent of the Ordinance and make a finding based upon the criteria outlined in Section 23-14(c) of the Ordinance. There are five (5) review criteria within this section of the ordinance.

Staff has fully reviewed the application and exception request, including the WQIA, and has determined impacts associated with the proposal to be minimal and are adequately offset with implementation of the mitigation plan. If the Board favors the resolution to grant approval, staff recommends the incorporation of the following conditions into the approval:

1. The applicant must obtain all other necessary local permits as required for the project.
2. A pre-construction meeting must be held on-site prior to the commencement of work.
3. All proposed mitigation plantings shall meet James City County standards of 1" caliper for the canopy and understory trees and proposed shrubs shall be minimum three gallon size.
4. Staff reserves the right to require erosion and sediment controls if field conditions warrant their use.
5. Full implementation of the RPA Mitigation Plan submitted with the WQIA and any additional Board mitigation requirements shall be guaranteed through the provisions of the Ordinance contained in Sections 23-10(3) (d) and 23-17(c) which is providing a form of surety satisfactory to the County Attorney.
6. This exception request approval shall become null and void if construction has not begun by May 11, 2012 or all improvements including the required mitigation plantings are not completed by that expiration date.
7. Written requests for an extension to an exception shall be submitted to the Environmental Division no later than 2 weeks prior to the expiration date.

### **Background**

Based on staff review of County records, the lot was recorded prior to the adoption of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. In 1990, the Ordinance was adopted and established a 100 foot RPA buffer on the lot. The house was then constructed in 1993. As the proposed retaining wall is considered accessory in nature, it cannot be administratively reviewed and therefore in accordance with section 23-14 of the Ordinance, an exception request must be considered by the Chesapeake Bay Board following public hearing under the formal exception process. The exception request before the board, and decision to approve or deny by resolution, is for encroachment into the RPA buffer for the construction of a retaining wall approximately 200 square feet in size.

For the Board's information, the opposite retaining wall shown on the plan is a replacement in place of an existing timber retaining wall. The existing wall has been in place since the original construction of the home which pre-dates the adoption of the 2004 revised Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. As this is a replacement of the existing structure that was in place prior to the adoption of the 2004 CBPO

revision, it will only require an administrative approval by the Division for its installation. The applicant has been informed and is aware of this requirement. It is the Staff's understanding that the applicant will undertake the construction of both walls simultaneously to minimize impacts to the RPA.

### **Water Quality Impact Assessment (WQIA)**

Under Sections 23-11 and 23-14 of the County's Chesapeake Bay Preservation ordinance, a water quality impact assessment (WQIA) must be submitted for any proposed land disturbing activity resulting from development or redevelopment within RPAs.

The applicant has submitted the required information as outlined in the *James City County Water Quality Impact Assessment Guidelines*. The applicant has submitted a *County Sensitive Area Activity Application* and a required mitigation plan, both of which are included in the case report packet.

### **Consideration by the Chesapeake Bay Board**

The exception granting body is permitted to require reasonable and appropriate conditions in granting the exception request in accordance with Section 23-14 of the County's Chesapeake Bay Preservation ordinance. The Chesapeake Bay Board is to fully consider Chesapeake Bay Exception CBE-11-100 as outlined and presented above and review the request for exception and the water quality impact assessment. The Board may grant the exception with such conditions and safeguards as deemed necessary to further the purpose and intent of the County's Chapter 23 Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance. Resolutions for granting approval or granting denial of Chesapeake Bay Exception CBE-11-100 are included for the Board's use and decision.

Staff Report prepared by:

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Michael P. Majdeski  
Senior Inspector

CONCUR:

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Scott J. Thomas  
Secretary to the Board

Attachments: Sensitive Area Activity Application  
Plat map exhibit (for information only)